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## Novacrat, September 1972

Nova University

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# THE NOVACRAT

Official Publication  
Gold Key of  
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SEPTEMBER, 1972

VOL. 7 NO. 4

## JAMES DONN, BACKER OF MANY GOOD CAUSES, WAS STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF NOVA UNIVERSITY

JAMES DONN



HE CARED FOR PEOPLE

### ALL GOLD KEY MEMBERS INVITED TO LUNCHEON SEPT. 28, 1972

ALL GOLD KEYMEN are invited to a special luncheon at the Lauderdale Yacht Club at noon, Thursday, September 28, 1972, to hear of unusual University accomplishments and to plan for the 1972-73 period. John E. Morris, Jr., GOLD KEY President, will preside.

Dr. Abraham Fischler will up-date GOLD KEY on school progress and "the State of the University".

This September 28th session, usually for the Board of Directors, has been expanded to include all members for two major reasons: to thank GOLD KEY for its continuing support over the years; and to bring every member up-to-date on the latest moves in the expanding University operations.

### DEATH AT 85 OF SOUTH FLORIDA NOTABLE MOURNED BY MANY; HE WAS IMPORTANT FACTOR IN FLORIDA GROWTH

James Donn, supporter of many good causes, founder of a great thoroughbred horse racing plant, important in the life and development of South Florida, is no more.

Nova University has many reasons to grieve at his passing, and this fall issue of the Novacrat is dedicated to him. The Derby Ball, the Day at the Races, The Donn Chair of Science Education . . . all memorialize his enthusiasm for Nova. He was an honorary member of the Board of Trustees of the University, a member of GOLD KEY, and his interest and support were as personal and vigorous as they were very, very important.

James Donn, Sr.'s 85 years of life spanned the growth of South Florida from a rural area to one of the nation's leading metropolitan centers. And the genial Scot grew with it. Donn was Chairman of the Board of Gulfstream Park and Exotic Gardens and guided them to positions of great prominence.

It was he who first saw the possibility of reviving Gulfstream. It had opened in 1939 under other management and after four days, collapsed. Donn thought there was room for a third track, with the established Hialeah and Tropical. There was opposition from many sources. Donn went into battle and in 1944, a new Gulfstream opened, and began to grow.

CONT'D PAGE 2

## DONN CONT'D FROM PG. 1

He served as chairman of the Dade Community Fund and was a member of the Community Chest. He was a past president of the Florida Florists Association and national director of Florists Telegraph Delivery. He served as chairman of the Florida Welfare Board and was a former member of the Florida Rate and Traffic Board. He donated the Donn Gardens to the University of Miami and was responsible for acquisition of land for a children's swimming pool for the Y.M.C.A. Northwest Park Association. He also was Broward County's Sportsman of the Year.

### GOOD DEEDS

Honors bestowed on Donn are too numerous to recite but they speak eloquently for his lifetime of good deeds.

Donn's story was Horatio Alger-like. Born in Lanark, Scotland, he was the son of the village blacksmith. He leaned toward an interest in flowers. Donn came to the United States and brought a letter of recommendation from a Lanark florist to one of New York's top men. That letter was the key to Donn's entrance into the business world.

He worked on the estates of New Yorkers, including those of John D. Rockefeller, George Gould, and Andrew Carnegie. From Rockefeller, he received a ten-dollar gold piece as a Christmas present. Then it was a magnificent gift and Donn was convinced that America was the place to be.

### COMES TO FLORIDA

A job opportunity came in Jacksonville, Florida. While there he was taken ill with typhoid fever. His fiancée, Nellie Whitefield, rushed to his side from New York. Donn made a miraculous recovery. He married his sweetheart and headed for Miami both to honeymoon and to search for a healthy climate for complete recuperation. Once in the Greater Miami area, Donn saw a chance to develop a floristry of his own. Before long Exotic Gardens, now one of the world's leading operations, was created. As Donn's family grew, so did the business until it was one of the world's best known. Donn also began to get contracts to landscape big estates.

It was such a contract that got him into racing. He landscaped the Tropical Park race track and when the work was finished there was no money to pay Donn. It was the same with other contractors. So they banded together and took stock. Over a ten-year period their money was repaid.

The senior Donn in 1962 relinquished the presidency to his son, James Donn, Jr., but he retained his keen interest. He was an innovator. He was the first to install elevators and escalators. A clubhouse was built, the backstretch enlarged and improved, and the entire plant beautifully landscaped with wide areas for parking.

### DONN THE INNOVATOR

He was the first to endow a stake in Florida with \$100,000. That was the Florida Derby in 1953. It marked a turning point upward for Florida racing. Further, he embellished the Florida Derby with a morning show that has become the talk of the turf.

Donn was the first to build a clubhouse as we know it today, full of conveniences. He was the first to introduce nine and ten race programs in Florida and thereby produced additional millions in revenue to the state and in purses for the horsemen. Donn led in making it mandatory for a portion of revenue from pari-mutuels to go into a welfare fund for the aged.

### ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY

He also found time to participate in community life. Past Potentate of Mahi Shrine and a 33rd degree Mason, he served as Deputy on the Masonic Supreme Council. He was a past president of Miami Rotary, headed the Royal Order of Constantine, was a former District Governor of Rotary and honorary member of the Hollywood Club.

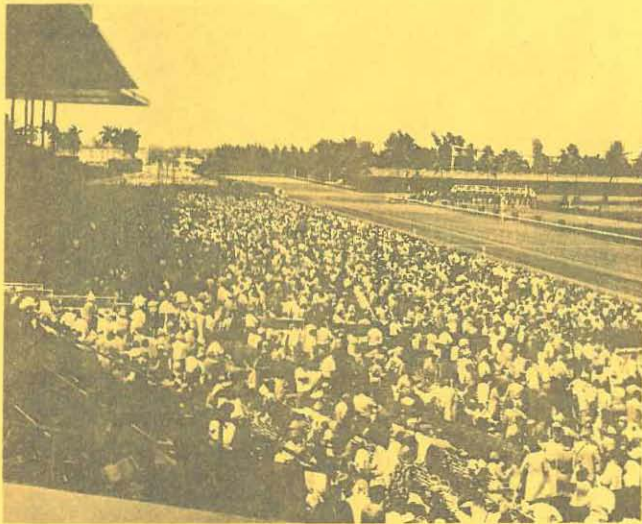
### JIMMY DONN

James Donn, Sr., long time member of the Nova University family, founded the James Donn Chair of Science Education, and was an honorary member of the Board of Trustees.

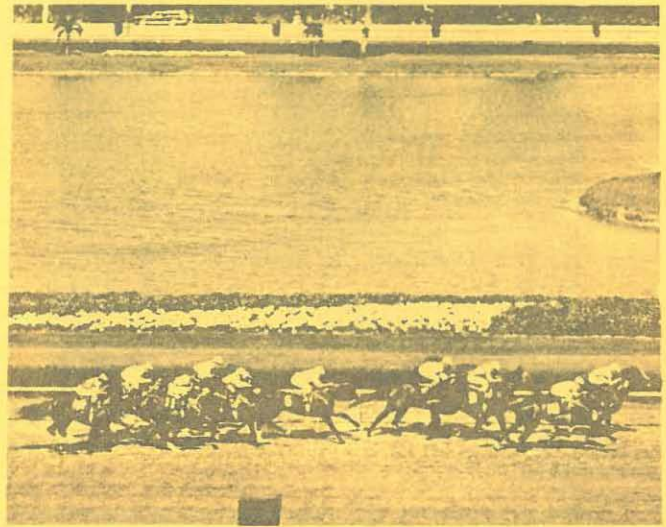
[Editor's Note: We are grateful to the Donn family and to Joe Tanenbaum for pictures and information on Jimmy Donn.]

# THE FLORIDA DERBY

## SCENE AT GULFSTREAM



## FAMOUS DERBY



## GULFSTREAM PRESIDENT



**JAMES DONN, JR.**

*James Donn, Jr., who succeeded his father as President of Gulfstream in 1962 (when James Donn, Sr. became Chairman of the Board) is a long time GOLD KEY member, has served as a Director, and has been responsible for stimulating several other friends to become active in this Nova University support group.*

*Both Donns and Fred Flipse, President of Exotic Gardens and secretary treasurer of Gulfstream have actively participated in GOLD KEY affairs and they work with, and for the Derby Balls!*

## NEWSY DOTS

*The ballyhoo and whoop-de-do over the first Florida Derby in 1952 were heart-warming. Pictures of Jimmy and his derby as well as cartoons and stories of the promotion appeared everywhere.*

*Out of these activities came the Derby Ball with which Nova University is so closely identified.*

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Donn insisted that horse racing was Florida's greatest single industry.

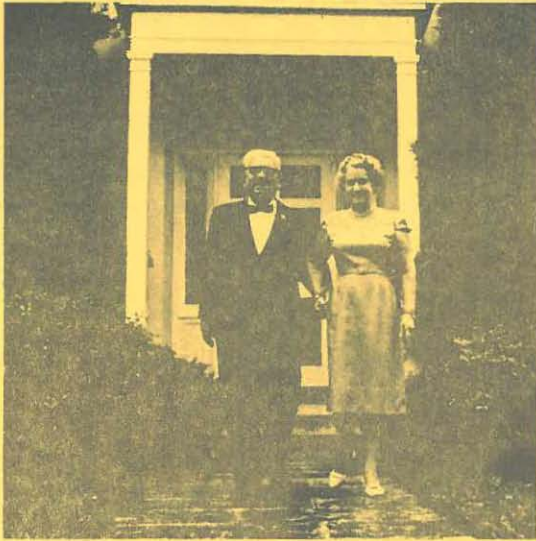
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Donn, the innovator: His Derby Days have included Dixieland bands, water skiers, bagpipes, high-divers, competition from ostriches to elephants. The Derby Daiquiri is another attraction and cause for relaxation.

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When he purchased defunct Gulfstream in 1944, one of the owners, Mrs. Marie Horning, was so pleased she had a coat made for him in his special plaid of the Clan McDonald.

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South Florida's magnificent flowers -- wild orchids, ixora, hibiscus, oleanders and bougainvillea and the others made it "a flower lovers delight," he recalled.

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He landscaped the James Deering estate in Miami, a showplace of European art, statuary and furnishings.

## JIMMY & NELLIE



*Jimmy Donn and his wife of fifty years were pictured in front of their gracious home when both enjoyed good health.*

*She was a Scottish lass, Nellie Whitefield, whom Donn married in 1914. She was born just three miles from Donn's own home at Lanark, Scotland. Donn met her in New York and she is said to have encouraged him to seek a future in the florist and nursery business in Florida.*

*Jimmy and the gracious Nellie attended a GOLD KEY gala on board a Caribbean cruise ship at Port Everglades and were prominent at other University affairs.*

## DONN, THE FLORIST

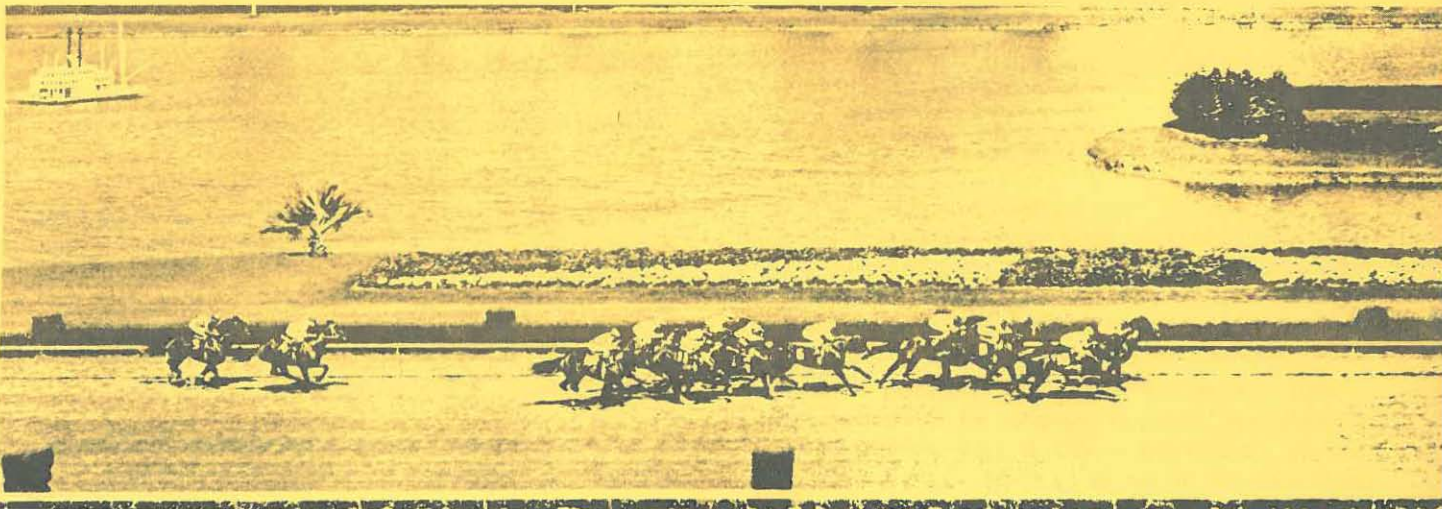


*Every morning Jimmy Donn was out inspecting the plantings about the racetrack grounds. Here he checks on the growth of giant caladiums.*

*When he acquired Gulfstream in 1944 for \$2,000,000, it was dilapidated. It had had its inaugural in 1939, but did not have the money for the mutual windows and closed its gates in four days. It was used by the Army in World War II, but was vacant as a horse plant for five years.*

*Gulfstream was to become "Donn's Track" and playground, where he tried out dozens of landscaping and improvement ideas. His friend Hugh Langford was a partner in the original purchase.*

*Gulfstream was to become one of Florida's most beautiful and successful racing plants.*



## BALLS AND " DAY AT THE RACES " MOST IMPORTANT

One of the most tangible contributions made by Jimmy Donn, and later by James Donn, Jr., was done through the great Derby Balls, and "the Day at the Races."

The Ball alone has grossed \$303,000 over the years. Added to that is the total of \$275,000 that Nova has received from the parimutuels at Gulfstream Park from the many days at the races, a total of \$587,000.

The Derby Ball had been in existence, raising money for charitable purposes, before it became a Nova institution. It was once staged by the United Fund, then for several years by the Dade-Broward Cancer Societies. It was when these became separate organizations that it came to Nova, according to Ginny (Mrs. Presley R.) Anheuser, first Executive Director and coordinator of activities for Nova University.

Ginny recalls the day when Jimmy Donn, Sr. and Dr. James Farquhar, guiding light of Nova's development and Chairman of its Trustees, came into her office in the Parker Building and handed her a check for \$120,000 for the school from the "Day at the Track" activities of 1966. Donn and Farquhar were longtime friends. Alice Coe was responsible for getting Ginny Anheuser into the Ball activities.

Jimmy Donn, Sr. actively participated in the 1966 Ball. Cy and Mary Ellen Young were Ball Chairmen. The Ball produced \$45,000. Other successful chairmen were Tom and Freida Shelton, 1967; Leo and Fran Goodwin, Jr., 1968; John and Roz Squires, 1969; Clinton and Marian Gamble, 1970.

In 1971 and 1972 Cy and Mary Ellen Young again accepted the chairmanships. In 1971 Mrs. Curtis (Angela) Clifford was executive director. In 1972 Mrs. Clifford and Mrs. Carol Houlihan coordinated the event.

For 1973, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Taylor are chairmen. They are blessed with fine experience, having been co-chairmen with the Young's in 1971 and 1972. Their co-chairmen for 1973 are Mr. and Mrs. Robert Harpenau. The petite Carol Houlihan is Executive Director.

Carol brings a background of interesting experience to the Director's work. She is the mother of four; has been in Florida twenty years; was chairman of the Mother's March of Dimes, is secretary of the Broward chapter; was Social Co-Ordinator of the Hollywood Seven Lively Arts Festival; active in Episcopal Churchwomen, the PTA and school groups; a member of the Hollywood Derby Ball Committee in 1970 and chairman of the Hollywood Derby Ball Committee in 1971.

At Nova she is Executive Director of the Derby Ball, the Royal Dames, the University Association, and the Library Society.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



*Ginny Anheuser*



*Angela Clifford*



*Carol Houlihan*

## COL. LOGAN C. BERRY RETIRES



*Col. and Mrs. Berry at the May 1972 Gold Key dinner dance.*

Retirement for the third time (from the U.S. Army, Civil Defense, and now the University) has caused Col. Logan C. Berry -- one of the quietest, most efficient, versatile, and most colorful members of the Nova staff -- to leave the services of this unique Institution.

Berry was carried on the school rolls as a consultant. When the main offices were on Las Olas in downtown Fort Lauderdale, he was Director of Physical Plant. He later became purchasing director and coordinated ground breakings and dedication ceremonies of new buildings as well as inaugurations and commencement programs.

It was axiomatic around the campus that if Berry was assigned a project, it would be carried out quietly, efficiently, and promptly with an absolute minimum of fuss and fury.

For the past year, since August Burghard gave up active control, the Colonel has been Executive Director of GOLD KEY, has handled its operations and contributed to its growth.

Col. Berry graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. As a young officer he was an excellent horseman and a formidable polo player. He is a post graduate of the University of Michigan, and of the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth and a graduate of the Army Language School at Monterey, California.



*Colonel Logan C. Berry*

He was an instructor at the Cavalry School at Fort Riley, Kansas; Assistant Commandant at the Tank Destroyer School, Fort Hood, Texas; and Director of Instruction of the Armored School, Fort Knox, Kentucky. His World War II record was brilliant. He participated in the invasion of Europe and went through the entire violent, bloody war.

"The Colonel", as the Novacrat once said, "is known as 'The Quiet Man' . . . blessed with a low key sense of humor; and he is a pleasure to be around." He and Mrs. Berry brightened many Nova social gatherings. The school will miss him and them.

Nova University wishes him well !

### THE NOVACRAT

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of GOLD KEY of Nova University

John E. Morris, Jr. - President  
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